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09/06/2006 Minutes

Open Space Committee

Minutes for Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Present were Chair Ann LeRoyer, members Joey Glushko, Elizabeth Karpati, Leslie Mayer, and David White, and guests David Levy of the Housing Corporation of Arlington and Laura Wiener, Director of Housing.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with some corrections. David White will send around the corrected version.

Most of the meeting was spent discussing with our guests the ideas that have been proposed for what to do with two parcels of land on Pond Lane next to the bikepath. . . The lot on the eastern side is owned by the Park & Rec Commission and is about 35,000 sq.ft. It is now used as a parking lot: it is rented out to Arlington Catholic High School and serves as overflow parking for Spy Pond Park users; it was also used as a staging area by the contractor during the park renovation. . . The lot on the western side is owned by the Town and is about 28,000 sq.ft. Once a house stood on it; since that burned down, the lot has been essentially unused and is somewhat overgrown – it is de facto green space.

Proposals being discussed:

. . . Moving the Atwood house from the Hodgdon-Noyes property to one of the lots and turning it into affordable housing. But the house is probably too big to be moved through Pond Lane. . . Building affordable housing on one of the lots. Park & Rec would prefer to have that done on the Town lot; the Con Com would prefer building on the present parking lot. . . Five or perhaps more units would fit on just part of the present parking lot. Because of its proximity to both the Mass. Ave. bus line and the bikepath, a zoning variance allowing just one parking space per unit rather than two may be possible. . . Park & Rec would like to get all boat trailers to stay out of the parking lot next to the pond and park in the present parking lot. Some parking in addition to that on the pond side is needed in the area. The Town has already turned down three proposals for a parking lot on the Town lot. . .

Closing the tunnel to cars and making all pond users park on the other side of the bikepath has been suggested but this is controversial [and how would boat trailers access the pond?]. . . Both Belmont High School, which wants to use Spy Pond for its boating program, and the people who play kayak water polo on the pond are interested in space for parking and boat storage. . . Laura Weiner suggests minimal development for passive recreation (some benches and picnic tables) for the Town lot which is now green space. The Open Space Committee concluded that it had no objection to developing some of the land in question but would prefer development of the parcel already used for parking.

Other matters:

. . . Plans for Town Day were discussed: display items, handouts, staffing of the booth. . . Elizabeth distributed a draft of Section 2, Goal D3 of the Open Space Plan revision, but there was no time left for

discussing it.